ISSAQUEENA LOOKOUT TOWER – RESTORATION COMMITTEE REPORT

See following text and photos.

Things are looking pretty good at the old "Lookout Tower". Since the last report, the exteriors of all the buildings have been reworked. Now there are new metal roofs on everything except the barn. There is new siding on all buildings except the house. Which, by-the-way, as you can see from the 1938 pic was originally board and batten (probably local yellow pine). At the start of the project I checked with the John Manville Company and found they began making gypsum siding board of the type that is now on the house in 1936. I assumed that it was installed on the Tower House around that time. However, about 6 months ago the 1938 photograph of the house was found in Dr. George H. Aull's papers at the ST Institute. Not only does it show the B&B siding but also note there is no electrical service line to the house. I had often wondered about the statement that it was the first house to have electricity in the area. It may have had a electrical power from a generator or battery system but not from from a remote source. I have on occasion spoke with some of the older local folks in the area (Pikes, Arnolds, Teets) and they all stated that there homes received electrical service in the Fall of 1940. The Tower is in the same service area as their homes were.
Anyway, many thanks are due to Knight Cox and Stassen Thompson for the tremendous progress. Stassen really got involved before his retirement and somehow found the funding to purchase the materials and pay contractors. He also arranged to have some of the maintenance personnel from the Farms Department work on the project as time allowed. Knight used some of his personnel and generally provided the coordination and oversight. Thanks are also due to Tree-South for donating the tree trimming work.

Of course there are a number of things that still need attention before the facility will be fully restored. The buildings on the site are in good shape and should not require major refurbishing for the next 30 to 40 years. The barn roof is the only roof that has not been replaced but Knight is making plans to have this done within the next year. The windmill needs to be restored. The manufacture, Aermoter Company, is still in business and assures me that it has parts in stock to rebuild the mill. The 7’x7’ metal cabin on the Tower has not been inspected. Mainly, because we don’t have many folks that are confident in climbing 100 feet of open steps. It needs to be inspected to at least make sure the cabin is still weather proof. Hopefully we can soon find someone who can get up there and assess the condition.
The house is currently occupied by Mr. & Mrs. Franklin Reynolds. Franklin (Red) works for Knight on the Clemson Forest. The Reynolds’s have made some really major improvements to the interior of the house. I have not seen all of them but the last time I was on site "Red" was doing a complete overhaul on the bathroom.

If you would care to visit the site for a walk-around of the exteriors of the buildings, please contact Knight so he can inform the Reynolds. Check with Knight - but if you are taking a group on a tour of the Forest I don’t think there would be any objection to just driving in the access road and making a loop around the Tower.
Issaqueena Tower - view from south
Clemson Exp. Forest - Spring 2011
Issaquena Tower House - Exterior Repair Completed
Clemson Experimental Forest
Spring 2010
Issaqueeena Lookout Tower - Trees Trimmed by Tree South, ca 2010
Issaqueena Lookout Tower - windows reglazed and painted. Clemson Exp. Forest, ca 2010
Issaqueena Lookout Tower - Porches, screens, new hardware restored, ca 2010
Clemson Exp. Forest
Issaqueeena Tower - Barn Siding Replaced and Painted (new roof needed)
Clemson Experimental Forest - Winter 2011
Clemson Exp. Forest
Spring 2011
Issaueena Tower- garage restored
Clemson Exp. Forest
Spring of 2011
Issaqueeana Tower - Smoke House restored
Clemson Exp. Forest - Winter 2011
Issaqueena Tower - snow scene
Clemson Exp. Forest- Jan. 2011
At this time we going to declare the first phase of restoration complete. As most of you know the Tower and buildings are listed on the national registry of firetowers. The grid of fire lookout towers that at one time spanned all the forested regions was one of the key factors enabling the conservation of the forest resources of the Nation. They served the purpose well for over 80 years but are rapidly disappearing from the landscape. Hopefully, the Issaqueena Tower will be well maintained into the future and perhaps, one-day, achieve a place on the National Historical Register.

Larry Reamer

July, 2011